

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 198287

EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 198287 ACTION CAIRO INFO USUN
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QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 198287

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EG, KS, KN

SUBJECT: RECENT DMZ INCIDENTS

REF: CAIRO 10404 (NODIS)

1. FOLLOWING IS GENERAL BACKGROUND ON INCIDENTS ALONG
KOREAN DEMILITARIZED ZONE REQUESTED REFTEL FOR USEAS
EMBASSY FINDS APPROPRIATE.

2. IN GENERAL, MILITARY TENSIONS ALONG THE DEMILITARIZED
ZONE BETWEEN SOUTH AND NORTH KOREA ARE LESS SEVERE THAN
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IN THE 1960'S. IN RECENT YEARS, NORTH KOREANS HAVE SHIF-
TED TACTICS AGAINST SOUTH TO PATTERN OF RECONNAISSANCE
INFILTRATION ACROSS DMZ BY SMALL PATROLS AND AGENTS
LANDED BY BOAT IN SOUTHERN PORTION OF THE ROK. APPREHEN-

SIONS OF SUCH AGENTS BY ROK SECURITY AUTHORITIES HAVE GENERALLY RUN AT LEVEL OF TWO TO FIVE INCIDENTS PER YEAR. MOST RECENT AGENT INCIDENT OCCURRED ON JUN 21, 1976, WHEN THE ROK ARMY SHOT AND KILLED THREE NORTH KOREAN AGENTS WHO HAD BEEN DISCOVERED ABOUT TWO KILOMETERS SOUTH OF THE DMZ ON A RECONNAISSANCE MISSION. THREE ROK ARMY MEN WERE KILLED IN THE EXCHANGE OF FIRE. MOST RECENT NORTH KOREAN-INITIATED DMZ INCIDENT TOOK PLACE AUGUST 5 WHEN NORTH KOREAN TROOPS OPENED FIRE ON ROK GUARD POST ON DMZ.

NORTH KOREANS REJECTED PROPOSAL FOR JOINT INVESTIGATIONS.

3. PERHAPS THE MOST SERIOUS EVIDENCE OF NORTH KOREAN INTENTIONS TOWARD THE ROK IS THE LARGE SIZED TUNNELS THEY HAVE CONSTRUCTED UNDER THE DEMILITARIZED ZONE, APPARENTLY FOR THE SURREPTITIOUS ENTRY OF AGENT PERSONNEL AND POSSIBLE TACTICAL HARASSMENT OF ROK UNITS IN CASE OF AN ATTACK. TWO OF THESE TUNNELS HAVE BEEN POSITIVELY DISCOVERED TO DATE (IN LATE 1974), ALTHOUGH US AND ROK MILITARY SUSPECT THE EXISTENCE OF AS MANY AS 16 MORE. THESE TUNNELS WERE APPARENTLY BEGUN IN LATE 1971, AT THE TIME THAT SOUTH NORTH RELATIONSHIPS HAD APPARENTLY THAWED TEMPORARILY. THUS, AT THE TIME OF THE SIGNING OF THE JOINT SOUTH-NORTH COMMUNIQUE IN JULY 1972, IN WHICH BOTH SIDES PLEDGED THEMSELVES TO WORK FOR PEACEFUL REUNIFICATION, THE NORTH KOREANS WERE ALREADY AT WORK ON THEIR TUNNELS.

4. IF IN FACT NORTH KOREANS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT TENSIONS AND INSTABILITY ON THE PENINSULA, IT IS DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND WHY THEY DO NOT ACCEPT OUR INVITATION TO DISCUSS WAYS TO EASE TENSIONS AND WHY THEY REFUSE TO RESUME DIALOGUE WITH THE SOUTH. LATTER HAS EXPRESSED ITS WILLINGNESS TO RESUME TALKS WITHOUT PRECONDITIONS.

5. IN REGARD TO ABOLITION OF UNC, WE ARE PREPARED, AS WE HAVE PUBLICLY STATED, TO AGREE TO TERMINATION OF COMMAND AS LONG AS ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS TO MAINTAIN INTEGRITY OF ARMISTICE AGREEMENT ARE AGREED UPON BY PAR-CONFIDENTIAL

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TIES CONCERNED. EMBASSY SHOULD POINT OUT THAT WE BELIEVE OTHERS SHOULD UNDERSTAND WHY WE CANNOT DISCUSS FUTURE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS ON THE PENINSULA WITHOUT PARTICIPATION OF ROK, WHICH IS RECOGNIZED BY 93 COUNTRIES AND WHICH REPRESENTS TWO-THIRDS OF KOREA'S POPULATION.

6. WE CONTINUE TO HOPE THAT SUPPORTERS OF NORTH KOREA WILL POINT OUT TO IT THAT ACCEPTANCE OF STANDING U.S. AND ROKG INVITATIONS TO DISCUSS MAINTENANCE OF ARMISTICE AGREEMENT AND WAYS TO EASE TENSIONS IS MOST REASONABLE WAY TO TEST US-ROK INTENTIONS AND BEGIN CREATION OF CLIMATE IN WHICH NEGOTIATIONS ON THE FUTURE OF THE PENINSULA CAN BE UNDERTAKEN. ROBINSON

UNQUOTE ROBINSON

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